



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • AUGUST 06, 2020 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION



INDIA'S COVID +VE CASES INCH CLOSER TO 20 LAKH

- With 52,509 fresh positive cases in a day, India's Covid-19 count raced past 19 lakh on Wednesday, standing at 19.08 lakh
- Active cases — 5.86 lakh — were only a fraction of the total
- 51,706 patients recover, taking the total recoveries to 12.82 lakh or 67.19% of all cases
- With 857 deaths since Tuesday morning, the total number of deaths reached 39,795



A road in a residential area in Bengaluru is inundated after heavy rains that lashed parts of the state in the last 24 hours on Wednesday | **ASHWINKRISHNA HP**

State braces for floods as more rains expected

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

HEAVY rains over the last few days have disrupted normal life in several districts which are now staring at a flood-like situation as they grapple with the Covid-19 pandemic. The State Government is closely monitoring the situation as rains are likely to continue over the next three-four days.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, who is currently under treatment at a private hospital in Bengaluru after testing positive for Covid-19, spoke to Chief Secretary T M Vijay Bhaskar over phone and directed him to release Rs 50 crore for taking up emergency works. "In the wake of heavy rains in several parts of the state, I have instructed the Chief Secretary to review the situation and issued instructions to DCs to closely monitor the situation and take necessary measures. I have also ordered immediate release of Rs 50 crore for emergency relief purposes," Yediyurappa said.

Revenue Minister R Ashoka, who is currently in home quarantine, also spoke to deputy commissioners of the flood-prone districts and senior officers and reviewed the situation.

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N R Vijayendra Sharma watches the Ayodhya temple Bhoomi Pujan on his mobile phone

Scholar watches event on mobile

Belagavi: Following incessant rain lashing the Belagavi region for the past few days, scholar N R Vijayendra Sharma, who fixed the muhurat for the Ram Mandir Bhoomi Pujan, watched the ceremony on his mobile phone, sitting outside his flooded house in Jakkinhonda. **P6**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the first brick for the shrine in Ayodhya; says the modern temple will be a reflection of India's culture and will inspire future generations; praises kar sevaks, but stops short of mentioning L K Advani, M M Joshi, Ashok Singhal

Harmony at core of Ram's ethos: PM

NAMITA BAIJPAI @Lucknow

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday laid the first brick of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya, ending the centuries-long wait of millions of devotees. Leading the Bhumi Pujan (foundation stone-laying ceremony), Modi extended gratitude to those who struggled to make the temple a reality.

Over 175 VVIPs and guests including RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat were witness to the historic moment at the Ram Janmabhoomi Sthal at Ayodhya, while people across the country watched the event on TV.

Addressing them, Modi said, "India is creating a golden chapter in Ayodhya and a wait of centuries end today. Many are hardly able to believe they are witnessing this day in their lifetime." He said the modern Ram temple will be a reflection of the culture, eternal faith, national spirit and collective will power of Indians and it will inspire the generations to come.

Praising the sacrifices of scores of Ram devotees in the course of the temple movement, Modi said, "The movement for Ram temple had dedication, struggle and resolve. I bow to those people whose sacrifice has made this possible."

However, the PM stopped short of mentioning the names of likes of L K Advani, M M Joshi and Ashok Singhal who had played a pivotal role in the temple movement in the 1990s.



With the construction of this temple, not only is history being made, but it is being repeated.

PM Narendra Modi

Modi talked about how the construction of a modern temple would catapult the town into one of the most happening destinations of religious tourism, adding that social harmony was the core principle of Lord Ram's governance.

"Lord Ram always stuck to the truth, and established social harmony as the cornerstone of his rule. He loved his subject equally, but had a special kindness for the poor and the needy. There is no aspect of life where Shree Ram doesn't serve as an inspiration," Modi said.

He also lauded the dignity and restraint with which fellow countrymen responded, re-

specting the feelings of everyone, when the judgement was passed by the Supreme Court last year. "Similar dignity and restraint is visible today also," said the PM.

Modi is the first PM to offer prayers at the Ram Janmabhoomi. He had earlier visited the temple town with L K Advani in 1991 — a year before the demolition of the disputed structure on December 6, 1992. However, since 2014, he has been maintaining a safe distance from Ayodhya and the issue of Ram temple.

In his address laced with emotions and sentiments, the PM promised a grand and divine temple saying the victory

OUR DREAM FULFILLED, SAYS BHAGWAT

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat said a struggle of decades has met its moment of glory, referring to the 'bhoomi puja' ceremony. "The then RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras had told us that be prepared for a struggle of 20 to 30 years for realising this dream," he said

WHY MODI CHANTED 'SIVAVAR RAM' INSTEAD OF JAI SHREE RAM?

Of late, saffron fringe groups have been using 'Jai Shree Ram' to showcase their emboldened demeanor. The Prime Minister did not want to be seen as promoting it on the auspicious day

chant of today was not only echoing in Ayodhya but it could be heard by all Indians and Ram devotees across the globe.

For the first time speaking vociferously for the temple in Ayodhya after taking over as PM, Modi quoted a couplet from Ramcharitmanas: "Ram Kaj kinhe binu, mohi kahan vishram (How can I rest without doing the service of Lord Ram)," summing up the mood of his 20-minute speech.

The PM also used to the occasion to send out a strong message to hostile forces including China and Pakistan by reciting a couplet from Ramcharitmanas: "Bhaya bin hoye na preet..." (without fear there can't be love). **P6,9**

Centre orders CBI to probe actor's death

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

THE Centre on Wednesday issued a notification directing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to take over the probe into the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput. The decision comes a day after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar demanded such a probe.

"A notification has been issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) paving way for the CBI probe in Rajput's death case," a senior official said.

A CBI spokesperson said, "We have received the notification and will soon take up the investigation into the case." Sources said, the agency is likely to register an FIR by Thursday morning.

While hearing a case in connection with the actor's death, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said the truth behind the death of the "gifted and talented artist" should come out. **P10**

₹56,181/10g
GOLD PRICES JUMP BY ₹1,365 ON WEAK DOLLAR
Investors continue to favour gold as they expect it will hold better value as fallout from Covid-19 **P13**

Sri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

Sri B.S. Yediyurappa
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Women and Child Development Department
Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens Department

A Sweet Relief for a Challenging Year

Women and Child Development

- Poshan Abhiyan Yojana
- Bhagyalakshmi Yojana
- Pradhanmantri Mathruvandana Yojana
- Seed Fund for Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribes Self Help Groups
- Distribution of Mobile phones to all Anganwadi Activists and Supervisors

Karnataka State Women Development Corporation

- Financial assistance of Rs. 1.00 lakh provided to 2574 former Devadasis under Devadasi rehabilitation Scheme.
- Action taken to provide loan and incentive for economic empowerment of 1651 oppressed women.
- Action initiated to take up a baseline survey of transgender

Karnataka State Integrated Child Protect Scheme

- Nutrition, medical treatment and education is being provided to 17,548 HIV infected children and a sum of Rs.1,000 is deposited directly into the bank accounts of 2,078 children every month, under the sponsored scheme

COVID-19

- Nutritious food provided to the doorsteps of all the beneficiaries of anganwadi centres during Covid-19 pandemic.
- Rs. 30 lakh life insurance coverage to all Anganwadi activists and helpers.

Senior Citizens Schemes

- Sandhya Suraksha monthly pension scheme.
- Distribution of online Identity Cards to senior citizens through Seva Sindhu Portal.
- Daycare Centres

Schemes for Physically-Challenged

- Special govt. schools for children with hearing and vision impairment.
- Distribution of talking laptops to children with visual impairment.
- Distribution of U.D.I.D. Cards.

Future Schemes

- Construction of own buildings for all anganwadi centres.
- Separate well-equipped buildings for Women and Child Development Directorate, Child Protection Society, Physically-Challenged and Senior Citizens Empowerment Department.

Smt. Shashikala A. Jolle, Minister for Women and Child Development, Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens participating in the programme

Shobha T.R., K.A.S. Managing Director
Karnataka State Women Development Corporation

Leelavathi K., I.A.S. Director
Department of Empowerment of Differently-Abled and Senior Citizens

Pallavi Akurathi, I.A.S. Director
Karnataka State Integrated Child Protection Scheme

Dayanand K.A., I.A.S. Director
Women and Child Development Department

Dr. Nagambika Devi, I.A.S. Additional Chief Secretary
Women and Child Development Department
Empowerment of Differently-Abled and Senior Citizens Department

"It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife."